

VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHGV #1077/01 3321412
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 281412Z NOV 09
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0371
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/VCJCS WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 5533
RHMFISS/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/DTRA ALEX WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUESDT/DTRA-OSSES DARMSTADT GE IMMEDIATE
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/DIRSSP WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA PRIORITY 2710
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV PRIORITY 1720
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 6927

S E C R E T GENEVA 001077

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR T, VC AND EUR/PRA
DOE FOR NNSA/NA-24
CIA FOR WINPAC
JCS FOR J5/DDGSA
SECDEF FOR OSD(P)/STRATCAP
NAVY FOR CNO-N5JA AND DIRSSP
AIRFORCE FOR HQ USAF/ASX AND ASXP
DTRA FOR OP-OS OP-OSA AND DIRECTOR
NSC FOR LOOK
DIA FOR LEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/28/2019
TAGS: [KACT](#) [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [US](#) [START](#)
SUBJECT: START FOLLOW-ON NEGOTIATIONS, GENEVA
(SFO-GVA-VII): CONVERSION OR ELIMINATION WORKING GROUP
MEETING, NOVEMBER 18, 2009

REF: GENEVA 0976 (SFO-GVA-VI-037)

Classified By: A/S Rose E. Gottemoeller, United States
START Negotiator. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (U) This is SFO-GVA-VII-033.

2. (U) Meeting Date: November 18, 2009
Time: 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
Place: U.S. Mission, Geneva

SUMMARY

3. (S) The fifth meeting of the U.S. and Russian Conversion or Elimination (CorE) Working Group for this session was held at the U.S. Mission on November 18, 2009. The two sides reviewed remaining points of difference in the General Provisions section of the CorE part of the Protocol (Second Tier Documents). The Russian side also presented monetary and safety-related reasons for limiting the time window for verification by national technical means (NTM) following elimination.

4. (S) The two sides also discussed the minimum requirements for facility elimination, focusing on the fixed structures for mobile launchers of ICBMs. The Russian side proposed simply dismantling the above-ground structure and removing those materials from the facility, leaving an uncovered concrete pad in place.

15. (S) Colonel Ryzhkov expressed continuing skepticism regarding the adequacy of U.S. procedures used to convert the B-1B heavy bomber to a strictly non-nuclear role. Mr. Elliott maintained that the procedures were wholly adequate. He cautioned that any U.S. flexibility on the Strategic Delivery Vehicle limit below the original level of 1100 was contingent on excluding those converted B-1Bs from the aggregate limits of Treaty Article II.

16. (U) Subject Summary: General Provisions, Revisited; Silo Elimination; Heavy Bomber Elimination; Facility Elimination-Concrete Pads; and, B-1B Conversion--RF Still Skeptical.

GENERAL PROVISIONS, REVISITED

17. (S) After handing over an updated Russian-proposed Joint Draft Text for portions of the CorE part of the Protocol, Ryzhkov led the working group through a review of the CorE "General Provisions." In the third paragraph, which describes the concepts of CorE, the only disputed text related to the Russian concept of authorizing periodic verification of converted items. The current U.S. position is that such items will no longer be "subject to the provisions of the Treaty" once conversion is completed.

18. (S) Ryzhkov pointed out that the Russian-proposed wording in the third paragraph was consistent with the U.S. offer to allow annual inspections of converted B-1B heavy bombers (REFTEL). This offer would keep the converted B-1B heavy

bombers within the scope of the SFO treaty, and the Russian language merely reflected this reality. Elliott responded that, while periodic viewings of converted heavy bombers could be an important transparency measure, the U.S. side believed that transparency was a two-way street and he was still waiting for the Russian side to provide sufficient transparency for mobile ICBMs and their launchers under the SFO treaty.

19. (S) Ultimately, the two sides agreed that this difference on post-conversion verification would be resolved at a later date. (Begin comment: The U.S. SSGNs were not mentioned by either side during this exchange. End comment.) Elliott expressed his hope that the U.S. side would clarify its position vis-a-vis mobile ICBMs and their launchers during the Ad Hoc Group meeting scheduled for November 19th.

110. (S) Ryzhkov moved to paragraph 4 of the General Provisions, which contains the process for adjudicating questions regarding procedures for CorE developed by the possessing Party. He stated that the Russian side had deleted its own paragraph describing this process and had accepted the U.S. proposal with only two minor changes for clarification. After a brief discussion, the U.S. side promised to further evaluate the wording changes proposed by the Russian side.

111. (S) Ryzhkov drew the working group's attention to paragraph 6 of the General Provisions, which discusses the verification of CorE. The Russian side had added some general language to capture the time windows for NTM means of verification and asset availability for inspection, which vary depending on the specific procedure in the CorE Protocol. After some discussion, Elliott promised to evaluate the proposed language further. Elliott also reminded Ryzhkov that the other Russian-proposed bracketed text in paragraph 6, which specifies verification of "the result" of CorE, would have to remain bracketed. (Begin comment: This text is unacceptable to the U.S. side since it would prohibit direct observation of the final elimination steps for mobile ICBMs. End comment.) Ryzhkov indicated his understanding.

SILO ELIMINATION

¶12. (S) The working group turned to the portion of Section III covering silo elimination. Elliott reported that, after careful assessment, the U.S. side insisted on a 60-day window to ensure an adequate "look" by NTM at Russian facilities, given the frequent lack of cooperative weather in Russia. However, the window for on-site inspection could certainly be shorter.

¶13. (S) Ryzhkov responded that a verification window of 60 days imposed an undue financial burden on the Russian Federation. He acknowledged the legitimacy of the U.S. argument for multiple verification windows, but then illogically recommended that a single compromise window of 45 days be used. In response to a query from Elliott regarding the reason for the financial burden, Mr. Smirnov explained that elimination processes, such as digging, re-filling

holes, and grading the area surrounding an eliminated silo, could only occur between March and October. If the 60-day window extended into the winter, Russia was forced to choose between paying excessive sums of money to complete the job during the winter or leaving holes unfilled until spring. The latter option, he opined, would pose a definite hazard to livestock.

¶14. (S) Elliott noted that the Russian side had fully bracketed the U.S. paragraph 4 in this section, and asked why this had been done. (Begin comment: Paragraph 4 describes procedures for an optional post-elimination inspection for ICBM silos. End comment.) Ryzhkov answered that the Russian side believed all provisions in this paragraph were now addressed by the General Provisions. Therefore, the Russian side proposed deleting the paragraph. Elliott agreed to evaluate the proposal.

HEAVY BOMBER ELIMINATION

¶15. (S) The two sides then began a review of procedures for Core of heavy bombers. Ryzhkov asked the U.S. side to remove the last brackets in the sub-paragraph describing the so-called "wild card" procedure for conversion, asserting that the material was now adequately addressed by paragraph 4 in the General Provisions. Elliott agreed to evaluate his proposal.

¶16. (S) Elliott then handed over new U.S.-proposed language covering the heavy bomber elimination.

Begin text:

The elimination process for a heavy bomber shall be to cut a wing or tail section from the fuselage, or cut the fuselage into two pieces, at a location obviously not an assembly joint, thereby rendering the heavy bomber inoperable.

End text.

¶17. (S) Elliott explained that previous versions of this provision had directed "removal" of a wing, and the U.S. side was concerned that the Russian word for removal could simply mean unbolting the wing--which was not the intent of either side. The new language was clearer because it utilized only the verb for "cut." Ryzhkov agreed with Elliott's presentation and choice of words, noting ruefully that the two sides had spent an enormous amount of time discussing this simple paragraph even though they had agreed on its content since September.

FACILITY ELIMINATION
- CONCRETE PADS

¶18. (S) Leading a discussion of facility elimination requirements, Elliott asserted that the only major issue still requiring agreement was what constituted the elimination of a fixed structure. Ryzhkov answered that this would be achieved by dismantling the building and removing

the pieces from the facility. Elliott commented that those measures might be sufficient, but that the U.S. side would insist that no structure be rebuilt on top of the remaining concrete pad that had served as the foundation.

¶19. (S) Ryzhkov pointed out that the concrete pads did not play the same role they had for the old Russian Pioneer and early Topol systems, which were restricted such that they could launch only from very specific locations. (Begin comment: These systems are known in the United States as the SS-20/SABER and the SS-25/SICKLE. End comment.) The Russian Federation's modern mobile ICBM systems were just like a submarine, capable of launching from any location. He reminded his American colleagues that current Russian doctrine required mobile ICBMs to disperse from their fixed structures in an environment of escalating international tension. In other words, the residual concrete pad had no remaining military value to the Russian Federation once the shelter of the fixed structure would be destroyed. Therefore, there was no reason for a treaty requirement to destroy the pad. (Begin comment: In response to a later request for clarification by Mr. Dwyer, Ryzhkov reiterated that the Russian side did not consider the concrete pad part of the fixed structure. End comment.)

¶20. (S) Elliott acknowledged Ryzhkov's explanation, but stressed that the United States required treaty language stipulating that buildings could not be rebuilt over the fixed structure foundations and support equipment could not be returned to the eliminated facility. Ryzhkov replied that the Russian side had no intention of using eliminated facilities for purposes inconsistent with the treaty. He opined that the U.S. position would be inconsistent if it permitted heavy bombers to even visit an airbase designated for use by bombers converted to non-nuclear roles. He said the Russian-proposed Treaty Article V had such a prohibition, preventing the Parties from using an eliminated facility for purposes inconsistent with the treaty. (Begin comment: Actually, Ryzhkov was mistaken. Only the U.S.-proposed text for Article V has such a prohibition, which is carried over from START. End comment.) Col Zaitsev then clarified that transient passage of strategic offensive arms through eliminated facilities would be permitted under the Russian proposal.

¶21. (S) Elliott asked whether this prohibition would also prevent the return of support equipment to the eliminated facility. Zaitsev answered that the Russian side did not have a definition for "support equipment," and for that reason had taken care to list each item required to be removed during facility elimination.

CONVERTED B-B:
R.F. STILL SKEPTICAL

¶22. (S) Elliott then expressed a concern that, under the Russian concept, once the United States had converted its last B-1B heavy bomber it would remain a strategic offensive arm equipped for non-nuclear armaments. This meant that the B-1B bases would not be considered eliminated facilities.

¶23. (S) In response, Ryzhkov asserted that the United States had failed to explain how the B-1B had been adequately modified during the so-called conversion process. Referring to the SSGNs, he noted that the U.S. side had proposed an actual demonstration of converted SLBM launchers, but that the U.S. side needed to provide more convincing reasons to confirm that the B-1B heavy bombers had been converted. He stated that if the scope of the conversion was limited to a

swapped connector in the bomb bay, the Russian Federation considered that problematic.

¶24. (S) Elliott responded by recalling that, during the presentation made by National Security Advisor General Jones in Moscow (REFTELL), the U.S. position had been that all B-1B bombers would either be converted using existing procedures or eliminated per the provisions being developed under START Follow-on. He noted that the Russian counterproposal had been silent on this aspect of the U.S. offer. For that reason, the United States insisted on retaining the brackets in paragraph 3 of the General Provisions for CorE. Elliott noted that, at the time of START Treaty implementation, both Parties had relied upon Agreed Statements to address unique issues requiring solutions as the treaty entered into force. He suggested that the two sides consider a similar strategy to address similar issues that would bridge START-to-START Follow-on. However, he re-emphasized that the United States intended to finish converting the B-1B bomber fleet using existing procedures, and he did not think the U.S. side would get any better at explaining the process.

¶25. (S) In response, Ryzhkov warned that, if the Russian side remained unconvinced about the adequacy of B-1B conversion, the Russian Delegation would engage its political masters to solve the problem. (Begin comment: This apparent resentment of the U.S. tactic to elevate the negotiations to the level of the National Security Advisor during his Moscow visit is a recurring theme in working group sessions. End comment.) Then, relenting slightly, he repeated that the Russian side still had official concerns about converted U.S. heavy bombers, which it considered an outstanding legacy issue from the START era. He urged his U.S. colleagues to keep this in mind.

¶26. (S) Elliott soberly asserted that he wanted to make sure the Russian side understood all his thoughts on this matter. He was sure that U.S. military commanders would be unable to agree to new limits on strategic delivery vehicles if the two sides had not reached closure on the issue of the B-1B heavy bomber. He knew that the United States did not want to go back and spend additional money on bombers that had already been converted.

¶27. (U) Documents exchanged.

- U.S.:

-- Revised Procedures for Heavy Bomber Elimination from Section V of Part III in the Protocol (in the original English), dated November 18, 2009,

- Russia:

-- Joint Draft Text for Sections I, III, and V of Part III in the Protocol (in the original Russian with unofficial English translation), dated November 18, 2009.

¶28. (U) Participants:

U.S.

Mr. Elliott
LCDR Brons
Mr. Broshar
Mr. Dwyer
Lt Col Goodman
Mr. Hanchett
Mr. McConnell
Ms. Purcell
LT Sicks
Dr. Hopkins (Int)

RUSSIA

Col Ryzhkov

Mr. Smirnov
Ms. Vodopolova
Mr. Voloskov
Col Zaitsev
Ms. Komshilova (Int)

¶29. (U) Gottemoeller sends.
GRIFFITHS